

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT QUARTERLY

A NEWSLETTER OF THE AEROSPACE EDUCATION AND TRAINING DIRECTORATE
HEADQUARTERS, CIVIL AIR PATROL

VOLUME 4.3

SCHEDULING: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MEETING TIME

The following was originally published in the January 1997 Civil Air Patrol News, and we've received several requests to re-print the article. Enjoy.

You've heard many times that one of the best ways to make your meetings more effective is to schedule activities well in advance. However, it may seem like an almost impossible task. Weather, speaker conflicts, time constraints, location limitations, and even scheduling the time to schedule seem like roadblocks. Sometimes, it seems much easier to just "wing it" on the meeting night, doesn't it?

People who schedule meetings faithfully say that meetings are much smoother, accomplish more, and are more enjoyable for all. Why? Because people know what's coming and can adequately prepare. When commanders arrive at the meeting they don't feel they have to be everywhere at once giving people things to do. They can concentrate on getting the mission accomplished.

There are many ways to schedule meetings. Some squadrons choose to use a quarterly schedule having a basic framework of activity subjects. When scheduling, all that is needed are the specific activities to fill the subject blocks.

Other squadrons, such as Hawker Senior Squadron 128 of the California Wing, assign one member to fully plan out each meeting. That senior is responsible for selecting the topics, finding any speakers needed, and handling the details.

Whatever scheduling program is used, there are several things to keep in mind:

➤ **Make the schedule far enough in advance and for long enough duration to give you breathing space.** Having a two or three week schedule simply isn't practical. It leaves you behind the power curve in planning. Speakers, for instance, typically needed several weeks notice to accept an invitation. It may take longer to gather necessary materials for hands-on projects, activities, etc. Scheduling aircraft and crews in particular is cumbersome when the activity is planned on short-notice.

➤ **Be sure to have several contingency plans available.** Nothing is guaranteed. It pays in the long run to have back-up plans available in case of an unforeseen event. For instance, have a video or film available in case a guest speaker doesn't show up or the weather turns ugly. If a meeting is canceled and it's practical, consider sliding the schedule forward to maintain the continuity of scheduled training.

➤ **Schedule the senior side of the meeting with as much detail as the cadet side.** This is a component that many squadrons have a little trouble with. Cadet sides of the meeting may be very well thought out and planned. But the senior side may tend to be free form, and sometimes left to chance. This cheats seniors out of a positive experience. Consider dedicating certain times of the senior meeting for specific events. For example: the first hour could be dedicated to training and testing (training in the specialty track, ES, communications, ECI study, and testing). When practical, consider combining events with cadets. Examples include ES practical training and first aid. Other parts of the meeting could be dedicated to guest speakers, and squadron administration.

FALL 2000

➤ **Don't construct your schedule during a meeting.** It's just too busy. A better time to plan is another evening during the week or during a weekend. This way you can take your time and flesh out what you want to accomplish without constant interruption.

➤ **Get your staff involved.** Scheduling is so much easier when it is a group effort. You and your staff can brainstorm and combine resources. You can delegate responsibility for implementing the schedule among the staff and reduce the workload for everyone. Consider having cadets join you in the planning process. They have a lot of good ideas. Getting your staff involved also creates buy-in. They will be happy to participate in implementing the schedule because they had a say in creating it.

All right, so you've decided to construct a schedule, where do you start? Consider what your unit concentrates on and build a schedule around your unit's particular specialty. If you are from a cadet or composite unit, you may also want to consider using the framework outlined in CAPR 52-16. Also remember the weekly requirement for an aerospace current events discussion and the monthly requirement for a safety briefing.

A dedicated meeting schedule is one of the simplest, yet most effective ways to control your meeting and make it enjoyable. A little foresight, imagination, and planning are all you need to make your meeting more productive and fun.



PARENTS AND CADETS: A HIDDEN RECRUITING SOURCE

As you know, autumn is usually a good time to recruit cadets because they are just beginning the new school year, are anxious to be with their friends, and are looking for new activities. But did you know it's also a good time to recruit senior members? Parents of new cadets, and older cadets entering college are two prime sources for new senior members.

Many parents are looking for ways to connect with their children, particularly as their children become teenagers. Encouraging parents to join with their child/cadet is a great way for them to enjoy activities with their children in a positive environment. It's also a great way to get senior member staffing and support for the unit.

Parents don't have to join as full members for them or the unit to receive the benefit of their help. Cadet sponsor membership is a great way for parents to get involved in a limited way, as their time and desire permit. In fact, many

parents who joined as cadet sponsor members eventually become full members of CAP as they realize what we have to offer. Many cadets also like the idea of having their parents in the unit, because it's a way they can be with their folks away from the pressure of the home environment. They can show their parents how much they are capable of.

Many parents who join as cadet sponsor members eventually transfer to full senior membership.

Another source of senior members are older cadets, between the ages of 18-21. Some older cadets may have finished the cadet program at a relatively young age, while others head off to military service or to college. Others get married. Those who enter active duty or marry must transfer to senior membership or be removed from the program.

But this shouldn't be the end of their CAP career. Encourage older cadets like these to consider senior membership. They can enjoy most of the benefits they had as cadets, and gain further benefits that seniors enjoy, as well as more responsibility.

Further, they don't have to start the CAP program all over again. Many of the certifications and ratings they earned as cadets transfer over to senior membership. If they attained the Mitchell, Earhart, or Spaatz Award, they can also be appointed to higher rank when they transfer: up to the grade of Senior Flight Officer (SFO) for former cadets ages 18-20, and up to the grade of Captain (CPT) if they are 21 years old.

As you can see, the fall doesn't have to be just the cadet recruiting season. You can also recruit motivated senior members: the parents of your new cadets, and your older cadets who are maturing into responsible men and women. These new seniors will give you more capability and more flexibility when accomplishing CAP's mission.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT QUARTERLY

HQ CAP/ETP

105 S. Hansell Street

Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6332

334-953-4243 DSN 493-4243

FAX: 334-953-7771 DSN 493-7771

E-Mail: ets@capnhq.gov

URL: <http://www.capnhq.gov/>

Mark Wilkinson

Chief

Bobbie Tourville

Program Manager

Jennifer Carroll

Registrar